

Free Will Baptist Church
10 Green Street
Somersworth Vicinity
Strafford County
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH- 213

HABS
NH,
9-SOMERV,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH
(GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH)

HABS No. NH-213

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NH,
9-SOMER V

1-

Location: 10 Green Street (Northeast Corner of
Green and Church Streets), Somersworth, Strafford
County, New Hampshire

Present Owner: Jeffrey F. Francoeur and Patricia J.
Francoeur, 306 High Street, Somersworth, New
Hampshire 03878

Present Occupant: Presently vacant; Greek Orthodox Church
until June, 1988

Significance: Built in 1842, this building is a good
example of the Greek Revival Style and
one of the few remaining historic churches in
Somersworth to escape destruction by fire or
demolition. It reflects the importance of the
church to the community a century and a half ago.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Physical History:

Date of erection: 1842. The "Architectural and Historical Survey of Somersworth" prepared by Richard Canoe gives this date and cites the Great Falls Directory published in 1848.

2. Architect: Unknown.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title. Reference is to the Registry of Deeds, of the County of Strafford, New Hampshire.

1766 Information taken from: The Passing Parade
Written by Martin J. Flanagan
Appendix, Page 167

Joseph Hentworth sold land
to

Andrew Horn (Horne) for what was to become the
Great Falls Manufacturing Company.

1842 Deed September 17, 1842, recorded May 31, 1843, in
Volume 192, Page 284.

Great Falls Manufacturing Co.

To

The Proprietors of the New Free Will Baptist
Meeting House of Somersworth, Strafford County,
New Hampshire

1920 Deed January 2, 1920, recorded January 3, 1920, in
Volume 390, Page 495.

George E. Pugsley and Jairus E. Came, Pew Holders
or Pew Owners of the First Free Will Baptist
Meeting House of Somersworth, Strafford County,
New Hampshire and the Proprietors of the New Free
Will Baptist Meeting House

To

The United Baptist Church (a corporation duly
existing by law) and of Agreement of the First
Evangelical Baptist Society) of Somersworth,
Strafford County, New Hampshire.

Free Will Baptist Church
(Greek Orthodox Church)
HABS No. NH-213 (Page 3)

1920 Deed July 1, 1920, recorded July 3, 1920, in
Volume 393, Page 309.
United Baptist Church, a Corporation, of
Somersworth, Strafford County, New Hampshire
To
The Greek Community of the Orthodox Church, Aghia
Elpis of Somersworth, Strafford County, New
Hampshire.

1987 Deed June 8, 1987, recorded August 14, 1987, in
Volume 1333, Page 632, 633, 634.
Raymond Merchant, a single person, of 67 Elm
Street, Somersworth, Strafford County, New
Hampshire
To
Jeffrey F. Francoeur and Patricia J. Francoeur,
dba Francoeur Realty, 306 High Street,
Somersworth, Strafford County, New Hampshire.

4. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers: Unknown
5. Original Plans & Construction: No original drawings have
been located. The original building was a simple rectangle
in plan, with a small rear projection in the center bay.
Later additions/alterations include a porch in the front,
enlargement and changes in the roof of the rear projection,
and extensive interior changes.
6. In 1894-1895 the Church underwent a major remodeling,
involving both interior and exterior changes. Stained glass
windows were installed, a porch added to the front, and
extensive interior remodeling, including a tin ceiling.

At some unknown date, the rear projection was added to and
altered.

B. Historical Context:

The Free Baptist Church of Somersworth was organized on August
18, 1828 by four men and thirteen women. They met at various
locations for three years, with the Rev. Nathaniel Thurston and
the Rev. Carlton Small, and other, leading them. In September,
1831, they built their first church for \$3500, on the site of the
present shoe factory, at the end of Market Street.

Their first pastor was the Rev. Samuel Robins. He was followed by the Rev. Arthur Caverno, the Rev. Jonathan Woodman, and others. Up to August, 1839, over 250 people had joined the church. During the great religious revival of 1839-40, an additional 140 people joined, and another 100 in the following (two) 2 years.

The church was reorganized as the First Freewill Baptist Church in Great Falls, New Hampshire, and the present church built at a cost of \$7000. and dedicated on December 22, 1842. The pastor at this time was the Rev. Silas Curtis. Some members were reluctant to leave the old church and considered starting a new church in the original building. They were finally convinced to maintain unity by the Rev. Ransom Dunn in 1845.

Several subsequent revivals increased numbers in the church. A new pastor was installed every two (2) or three (3) years. The longest tenure was held by the Rev. Mr. Perry from 1874 to 1881. The church took an Evangelical direction in 1893 with the formation of the Men's Praying Band.

Under the direction of the Rev. O. H. Tracy the church underwent a major remodeling of both the interior and exterior. Between 1894 and 1895, stained glass windows were installed, the present tin ceilings and beams installed and other rooms completely redecorated. The rooms to the right of the vestibule was referred to as a reception room and to the left a parlor. Woodwork was natural ash and walnut with ceilings and walls in various colors. The Architect of this project was J. Stanley D'Orsay of New York, and the work done by a contractor named Mitchell of Berwick, Maine. The entire project cost \$7000, equal to the cost of the original building in 1842.

The Pastor in 1895 was the Rev. O. H. Tracy of Auburn, Maine, the grandson and great grandson of previous pastors.

Little is known of church history between 1895 and 1920.

On January 2, 1920, the First Free Will Baptist Society sold the building to the United Baptist Church of Somersworth for \$1.00.

Subsequently, on July 3, 1920, the building was sold to the Greek Orthodox Church of Somersworth for \$12,000. In 1939, a fire in the sanctuary destroyed the altar and burned a hole through the floor. It remained in use as a Greek Orthodox Church until June, 1988, when it was vacated to move to a new structure.

PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This building is a good example of the Greek Revival Style common to public buildings of this period. The interior, remodelled in 1895, is in excellent condition and is a good example of interior architecture of the time. Its location reflects the change in the population center away from the original town site along the Salmon Falls River.
2. Condition of the Fabric: The exterior brick bearing wall is sound; level, plumb, and free of cracks. With the exception of the first floor structure, the wood framing is in excellent condition. The first floor is not level due to failing supports. The interior woodwork and tin ceiling are in excellent condition.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: In plan, the building is a rectangle, 66 feet wide by 74 feet long, with a ceiling height of 26 feet. There are three bays across the front and four bays on the side. There is a loft in the front of the building and a bell tower on the pitched roof, reaching a height of 70 feet above grade. Attached to the rear is a 37 foot by 8 foot addition built in several stages, and a 12 foot by 14 foot porch was added to the front. There is a crawl space with partial basement under the first floor.
2. Foundation: The foundation consists of masonry rubble capped with pieces of cut granite approximately eight (8) inches thick and two (2) feet high.
3. Walls: Exterior walls consist of a 16 inch thick brick bearing wall. The red brick are laid in lime mortar. The brick bonding is irregular; every 9th to 11th courses is a header course. The only ornamentation in the brickwork is recesses, one (1) course deep. Window openings are within these recesses. Headers and sills are granite.

4. Structural Systems, Framing: First floor framing consists of 8 x 8 sawn wood beams approximately 11 feet on center and spanning approximately 12 feet. The beams are supported on wood posts, some of which are not adequately supported and some of which have been replaced over the years. This is the weak point in the floor structure and has led to some subsidence. Spanning across the beams are 2 - 2 x 6 joists 24 inches on center, which are covered by one inch boards. The floor was built with an 18 inch pitch from vestibule to alter.

The 7' x 48' balcony is cantilevered over the rear wall of the sanctuary. It is an extension of the 18' x 63' loft. The size and direction of the loft framing is unknown. Evident in the loft space are two 9 x 9 columns which support the rear of the bell tower above. These columns continue through the first floor to the basement below.

Five flat top heavy timber trusses about 12' on center form the principle roof framing. They have a clear span of almost 63'. Perpendicular to the trusses are purlins at the top and midpoint of the sloped top chord. These in turn support 3" x 5" rafters 2'-4" on center cantilevered beyond the top purlin and meeting at the ridge line. There is no ridge board or beam. The rafters are covered by 1" boards.

The truss locations do not coincide with the four window bays, one truss bearing directly over the rear windows. Also, the diagonal braces and beams visible inside the structure do not coincide with the roof structure. These beams are suspended below the bottom chords of the trusses and below the original lath and plaster ceiling. The braces and beams are a later addition to the structure and may not be functional.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:

Front Porch: The front porch, 12 feet wide and 14 feet deep, is a later addition to the original structure, built about 1895. The roof framing consists of exposed sawn two (2) inch rafters about 24 inches on center supported on beams which in turn are supported by pairs of turned wood columns resting on brick piers. A cornice consisting of turned spindles between beam and a lower horizontal member, is carried across the front, forming a pediment which contains three (3) turned post, one (1) vertical, and one (1) perpendicular to each side of the gable roof. Each side of the porch is enclosed with a railing matching the cornice.

Rear projection: This appendage, probably originally 16 feet wide by 8 feet deep, was enlarged, and the gable roof replaced with a shed roof. The two chimneys appear to be contemporary with these additions. The walls are 12 inch brick bearing wall.

6. Chimneys: The two previously mentioned chimneys are not original to the building probably replacing brick chimneys supported by attic framing. They are 24 inches by 24 inches brick, attached to the outside of the rear wall. The south chimney has fallen, or been removed to the roof line.

A third chimney rises behind the stepped front wall. This chimney is currently being used. There is no evidence of a second chimney in the S.W. corner.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The front entrance consists of a pair of large, five (5) panel curved top doors, four (4) risers above the pavement. The door sill is granite.
- b. Windows: The windows on the front are double hung with stained glass glazing. These replaced the original divided light sash. On both sides are two story high double hung windows with stained glass sash which again replaced the original divided light windows. They are set in recessed brick panels.

There are two double hung windows in the rear gable end and two in the rear addition. The rear window configuration on the end wall is not known at this time, because of the rear addition construction.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof has a 6 in 12 pitch. Roof sheathing consists of one (1) inch boards covered with several layers of asphalt shingles. The original material is unknown, probably wood shingles.

- b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves and gable ends are built up of flat and molded pine boards. There are no gutters. They are simple in form, being devoid of brackets, dentils, etc..
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The most prominent feature of the front elevation is the bell tower, 16 feet square, rising 22 feet above the ridge. The bell tower is of wood construction, except for the front of the base which is brick. Each elevation of the tower has a wood pilaster at each side and a full height opening. The lower part is louvered and the upper two thirds is clapboarded.

A circular pattern on the front indicates where a clock face, approximately 5 feet in diameter, once was.

Both 1895 and 1913 photographs show a much taller steeple with clock on the west and south sides.

The tower is capped with a steep hip roof and a simple cross.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Basement: The north half of the basement consists of a variable height crawl space. The south half is mostly a full height basement and partly crawl space. It consists of the remains of a kitchen and dining hall, stairway, and toilet rooms.
- b. First Floor: With the exception of the entrance hall and adjacent offices, the first floor is two stories high. At the east end is a raised alter platform extending into the lean-to addition.
- c. Loft: The loft is above the entry and adjacent rooms on the west side of the first floor. A low stage occupies the north end of the loft.

2. Stairways:

- a. Loft Stair: This is located in the south west corner

of the building. It consists of 16, five (5) foot wide, risers in an "L" configuration. A heavy wood railing terminates at a large square newel post on the first floor. The railing is supported by two turned balusters per thread.

- b. Basement Stair: Under the loft stair is a narrower, unadorned "L" shaped stair to the basement.
- c. Stair to Alter: Located in the east side of the basement/crawlspace is an unused stair to the alter area. The opening to the alter has been closed.

3. Flooring:

Finish floors are typically 1 x 4 tongue and groove hardwood. Color is a nondescript dark color from many layers of finishes over the years. Most of the basement flooring is broken and rotted but was apparently pine boards.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finish:

- a. Sanctuary: Walls are plaster on sawn lath. Below the window sills is a chair rail with a vertical beaded tongue and groove board wainscoting. The original plaster on lath ceiling is covered with a pressed tin panels, square and rectangular. The ceiling is divided by false beams which are in turn supported by non functional diagonal braces. A closet in the loft contains remains of accordion lath.
- b. Loft: Similar to sanctuary.
- c. Entry Hall and Adjacent Rooms: Similar to sanctuary, but plaster ceiling.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways & Doors: Interior doors are typically four panel, with panels secured in rails and stiles by molding. Door trim consists of 1 x 5 moulded trim with turned blocks at the corners. All woodwork is painted off-white.

- b. Windows: The most prominent windows are the four 15 foot high pair of double hung windows on each side of the building.

6. Decorative Features & Trim:

One of the most prominent interior features is the loft balcony opening on to the loft thru three sets of 9'-6" high sliding panel doors. The brackets and balustrade and particularly noteworthy. The molded and carved brackets are terminated with a turned drop. The balustrade is divided and terminated by heavy, square posts above each bracket.

The other prominent feature is the diagonal braces which appear to support the false beams. These 8" x 8" x 7 foot braces frame into an 8 foot half post, also terminated by a drop.

7. Hardware:

Interior and window hardware is circa 1895. Door handles and plates are ornate brass.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation. Two of the three original chimneys have been removed and replaced with those visible on the rear of the church. A third chimney at the front of the church is apparently original. There are no traces of the original wood stoves, hearths, and pipes. Large quantities of ashes were found in the crawlspace.

A 1913 church report cites expenditures for both coal and furnace repairs.

The existing heating systems consist of a single oil fired forced hot air furnace connected to the front chimney. A system of duct work distributes the hot air. A fuel tank is located in the crawl space.

- b. Lighting: Original lighting was by oil lamp. No traces of these remain. The sanctuary is illuminated by incandescent chandelier style fixtures with glass ornaments. A plaque in the foyer indicates lighting was given to the church in 1913 by a church member. In 1895, lighting was by both gas and electricity.
 - c. Plumbing: The original building had no plumbing. The present plumbing system consists of a single toilet room on the first floor, near the stairway. The remains of two basement toilet rooms are directly below this room.
9. Original Furnishings: The pews appear to be original. No other furniture remains.

A free standing pipe organ is located to the right of the altar. It was rebuilt in the 1894-95 remodeling.

D. Site:

- 1. General Setting and Orientation: The structure is located on a corner lot, with the front entrance facing west. The site drops about 8 feet from front to back and north to south. The site is only slightly larger than the footprint of the building, with the front and south sides almost on the property lines. Although exposed directly to the north west winds, the entrance fronts on a once busy road, Green Street. Church Street is a side street providing access to the lower part of town.
- 2. Historic Landscape Design: The present landscaping is minimal, due to site limitations. There is no evidence of any previous landscaping. Most of the present growth consists of volunteer trees. Prior to the porch construction in 1895, a pair of trees framed the front of the church.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography

- 1. Strafford County, Registry of Deeds.

2. Candee, Richard "Architectural and Historical Survey of Somersworth"
3. Flanagan, Martin The Passing Parade.
4. Great Falls Directory, 1848
5. Heeden, (First Name Unknown) Scrapbook donated to Somersworth Public Library

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The building owners, Jeffrey F. Francoeur, Jr. and Patricia J. Francoeur, plan to convert the building into apartments. The Architect for the conversion project is Jonathan H. Downing, of Alton Bay, New Hampshire. Although neither on the National Register of Historic Places, nor in an Historic District, Documentation is required by an agreement between the Somersworth Housing Authority, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer.

This document was prepared by Magnus McLetchie, Architect, for the office of Jonathan H. Downing, Architect, J. H. Downing & Co., Inc., Alton Bay, New Hampshire, with the assistance of his office, in June, 1988. Photographs were by Ernest Gould of Manchester, New Hampshire.

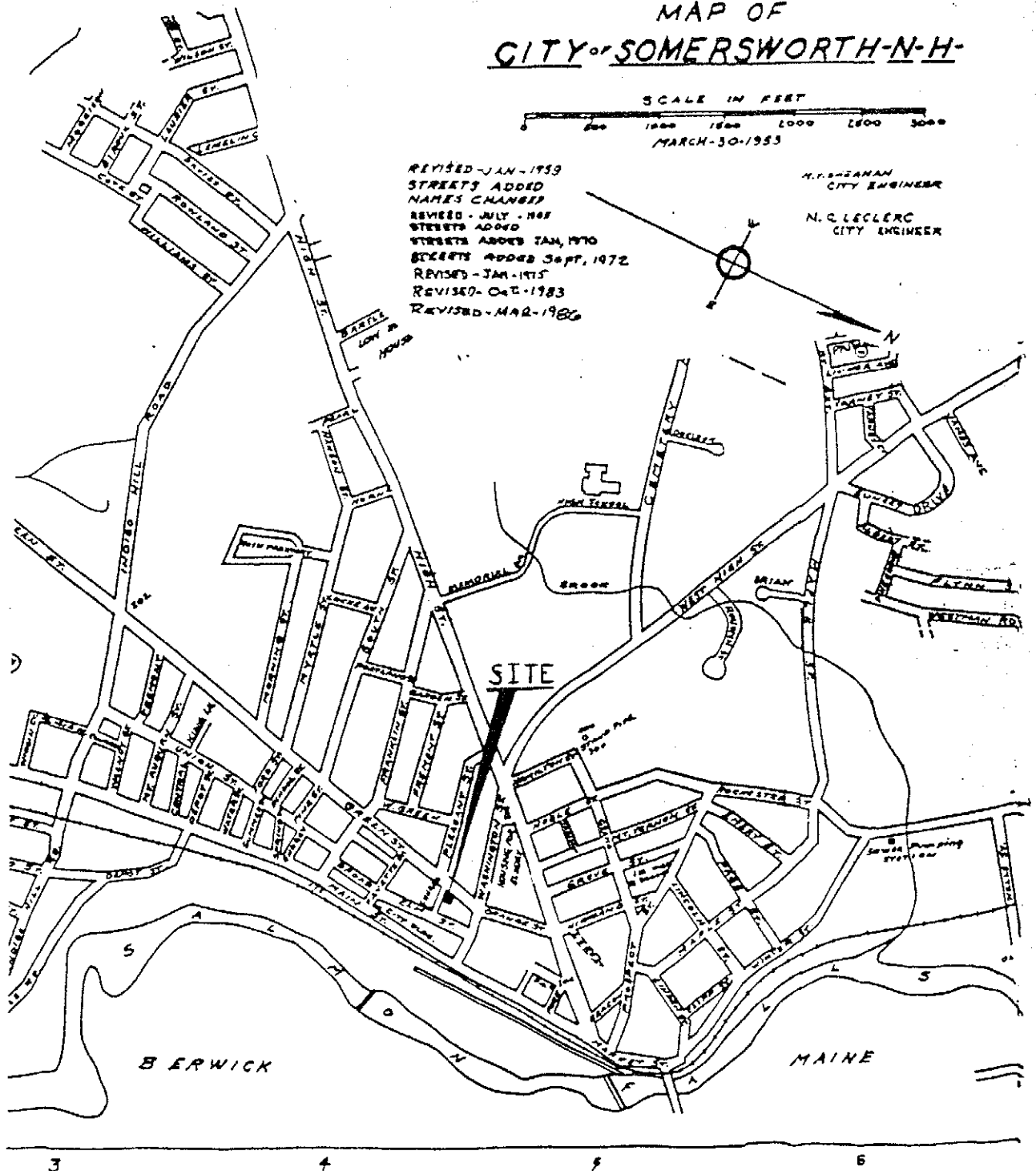
MAP OF
CITY OF SOMERSWORTH-N.H.

SCALE IN FEET
0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000
MARCH-30-1953

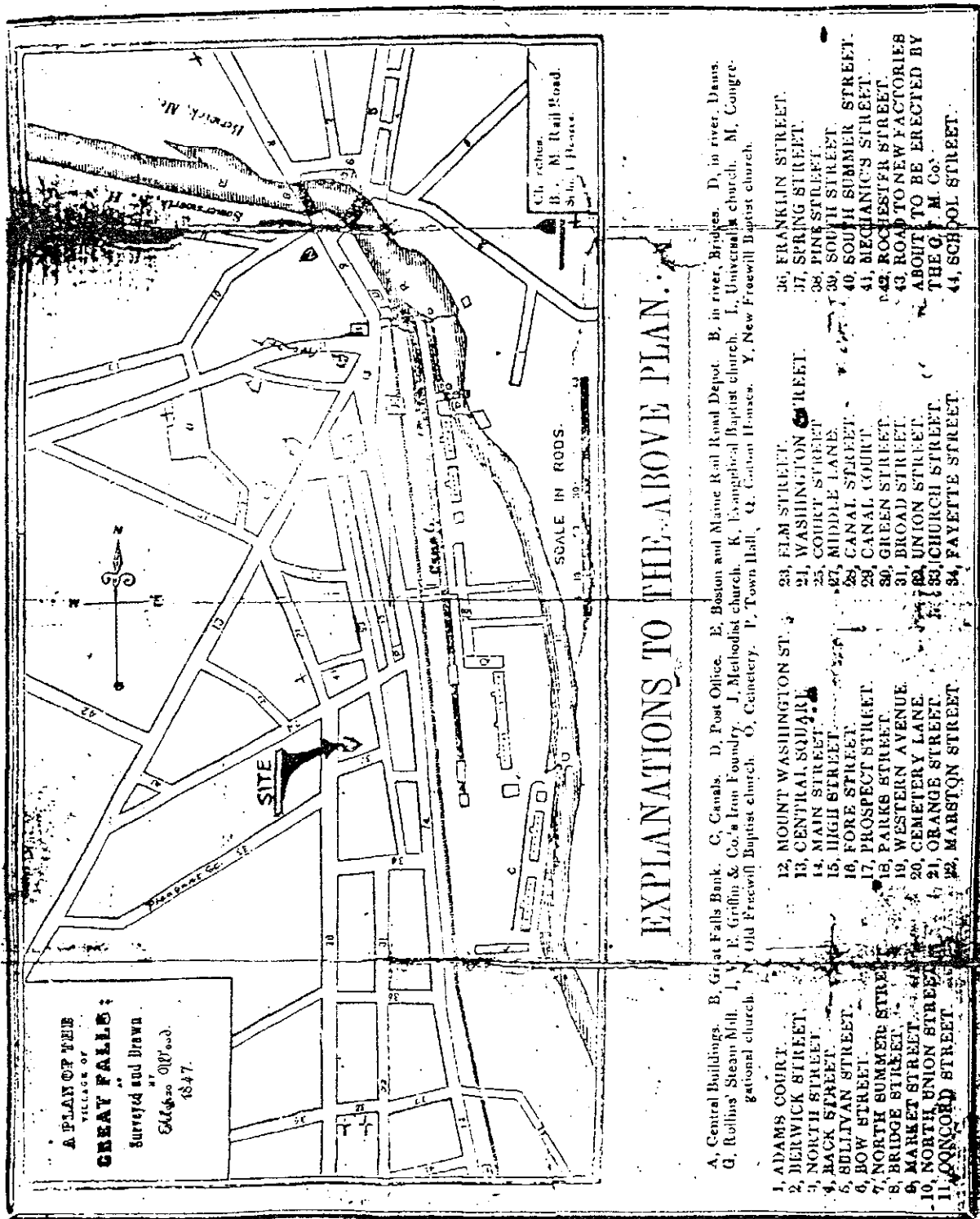
REVISED-JAN-1939
STREETS ADDED
NAMES CHANGED
REVISED-JULY-1948
STREETS ADDED
STREETS ADDED JAN, 1970
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REVISED-JAN-1975
REVISED-OCT-1983
REVISED-MAR-1986

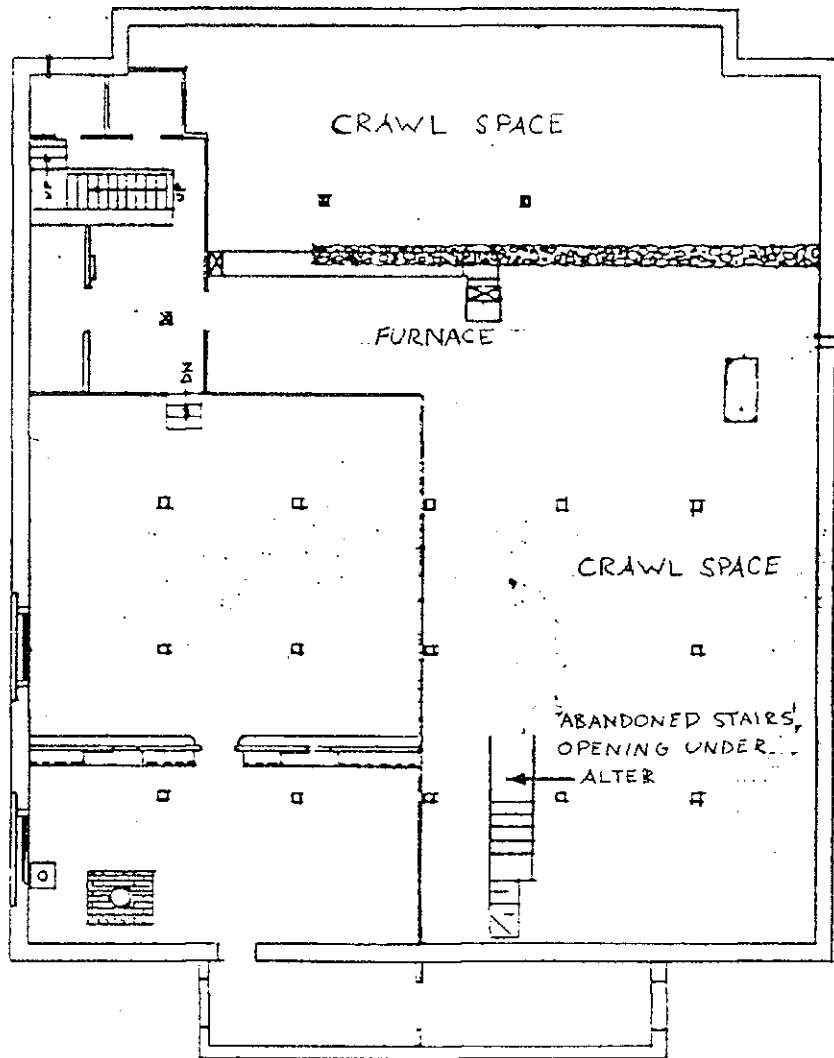
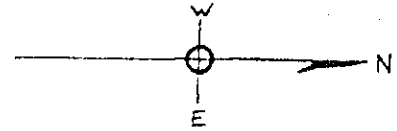
H. P. SHANAHAN
CITY ENGINEER

N. C. LECLERC
CITY ENGINEER

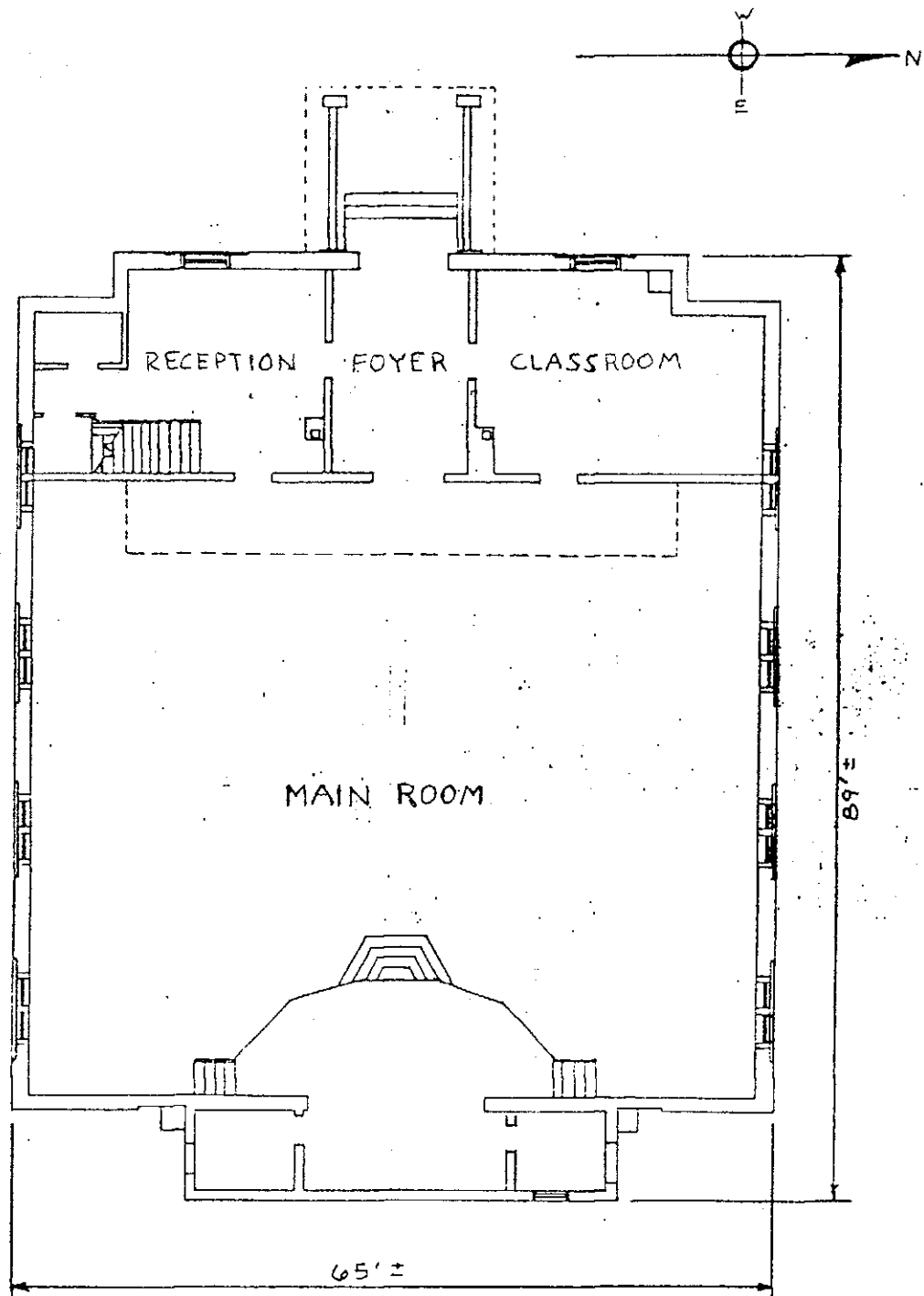


LOCUS MAP

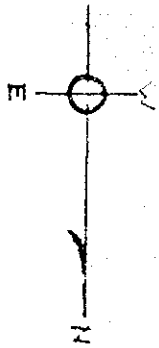
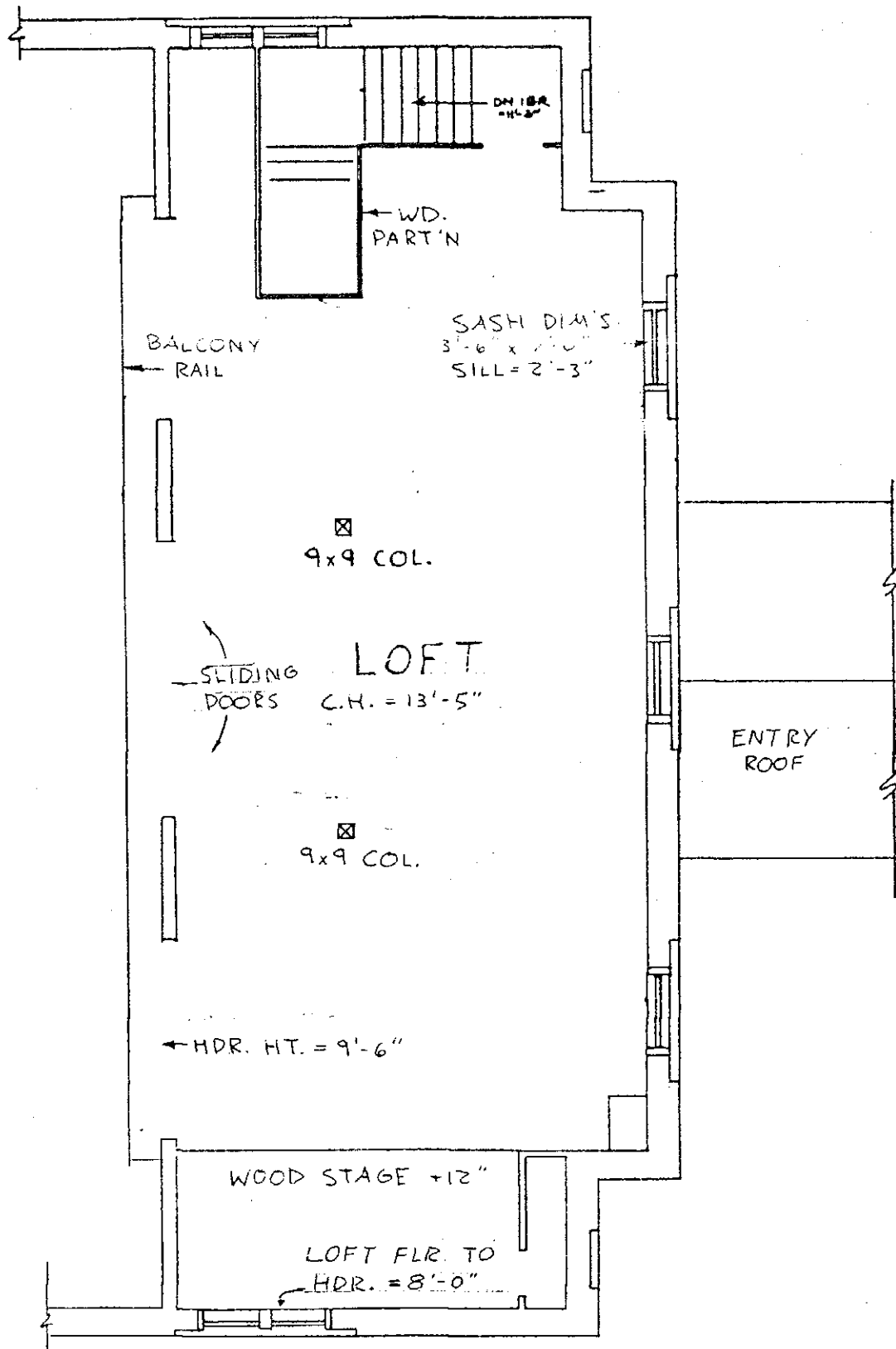




BASEMENT PLAN
NO SCALE

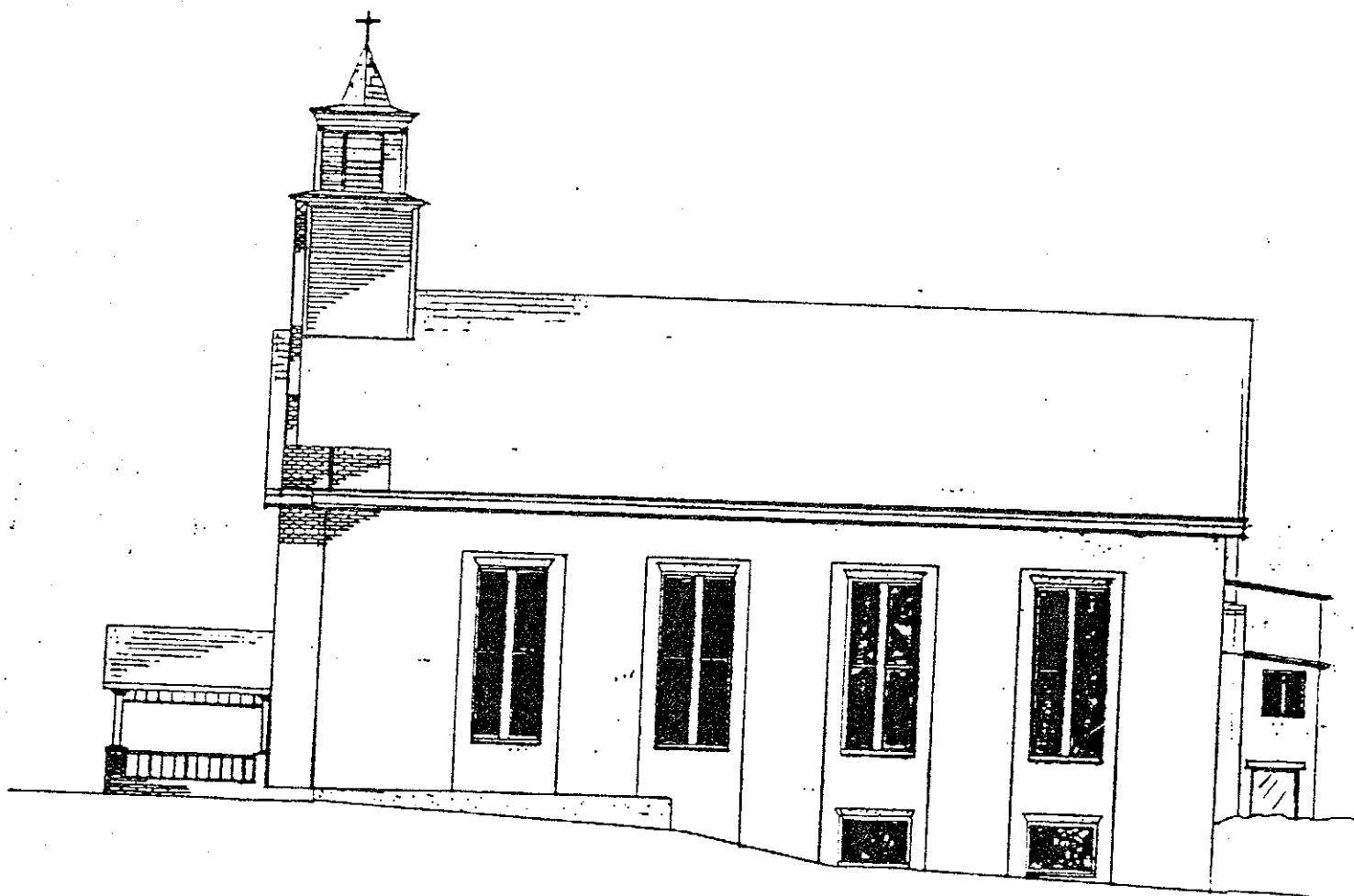


FIRST FLOOR

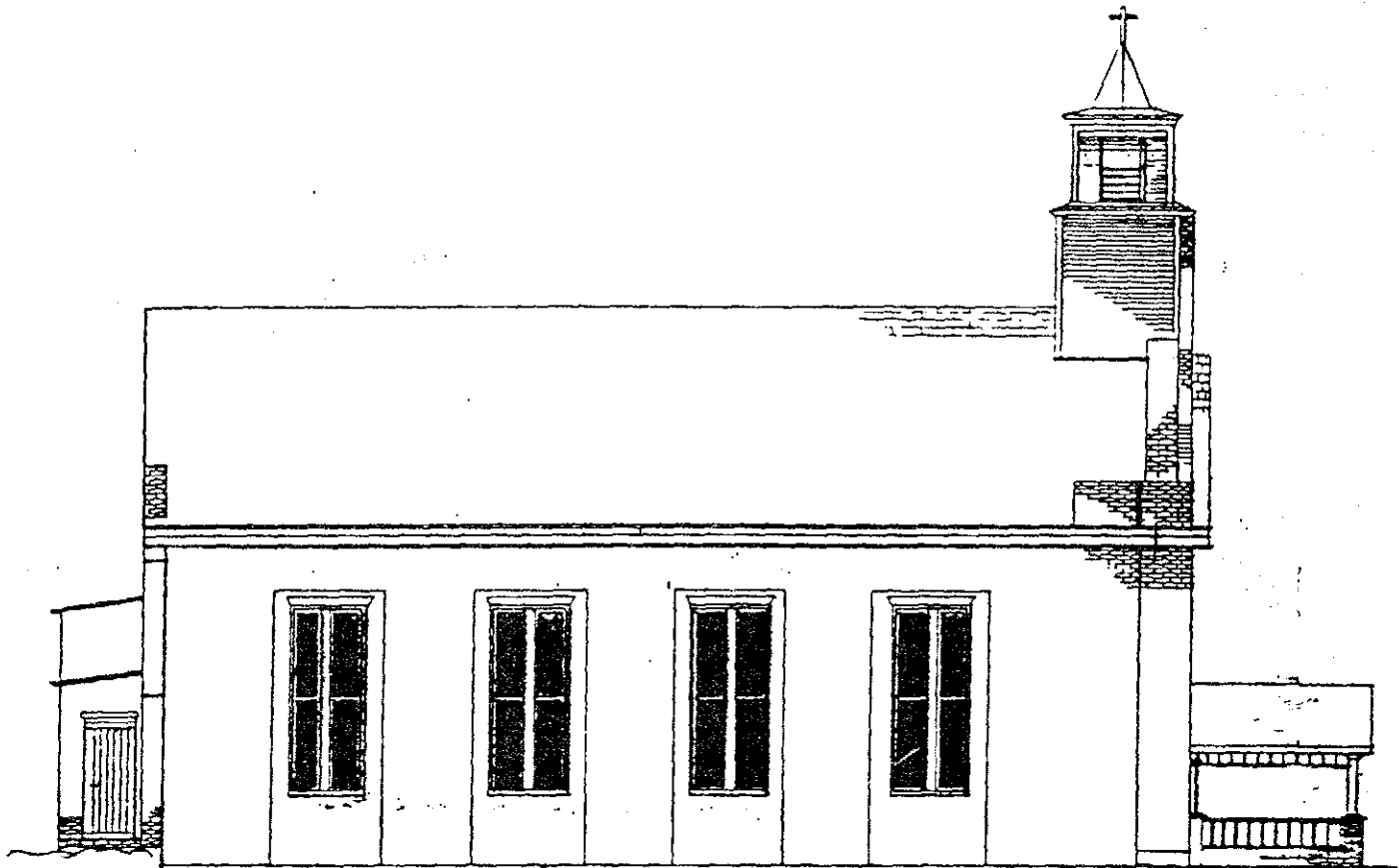


PLAN OF LOFT
1/8" = 1'-0"

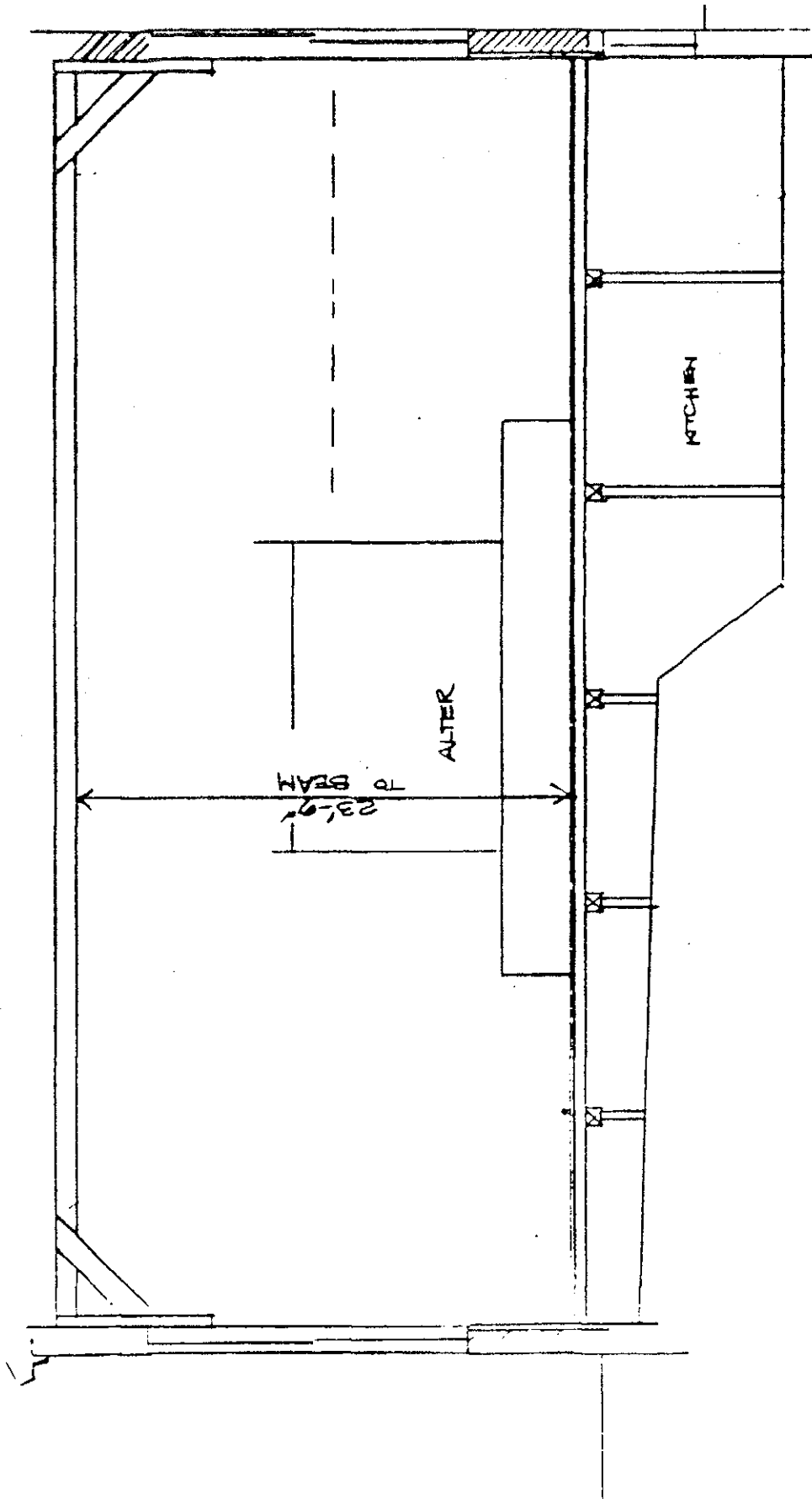
Free Will Baptist Church
(Greek Orthodox Church)
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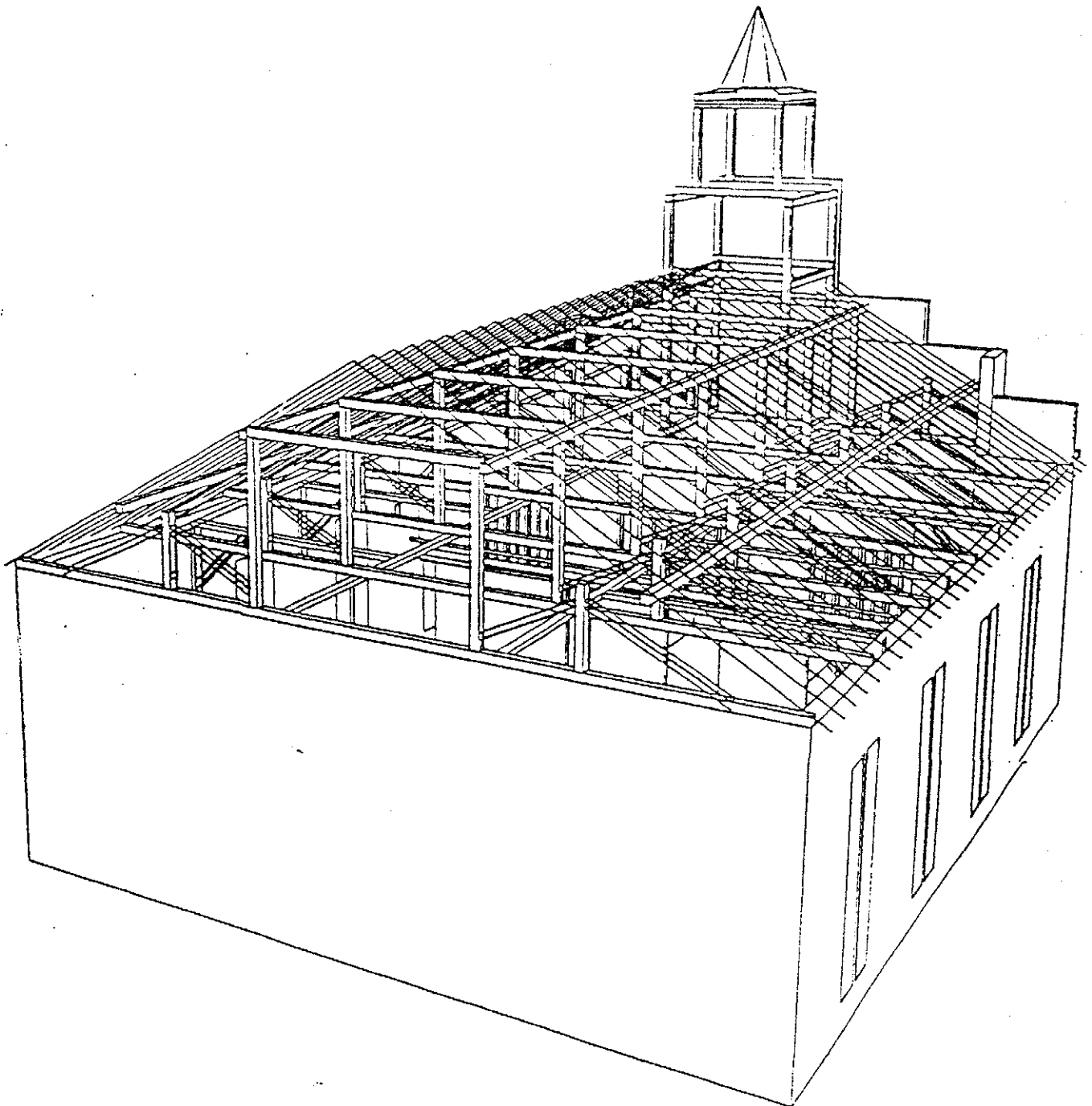
ELEVATION - CHURCH ST.



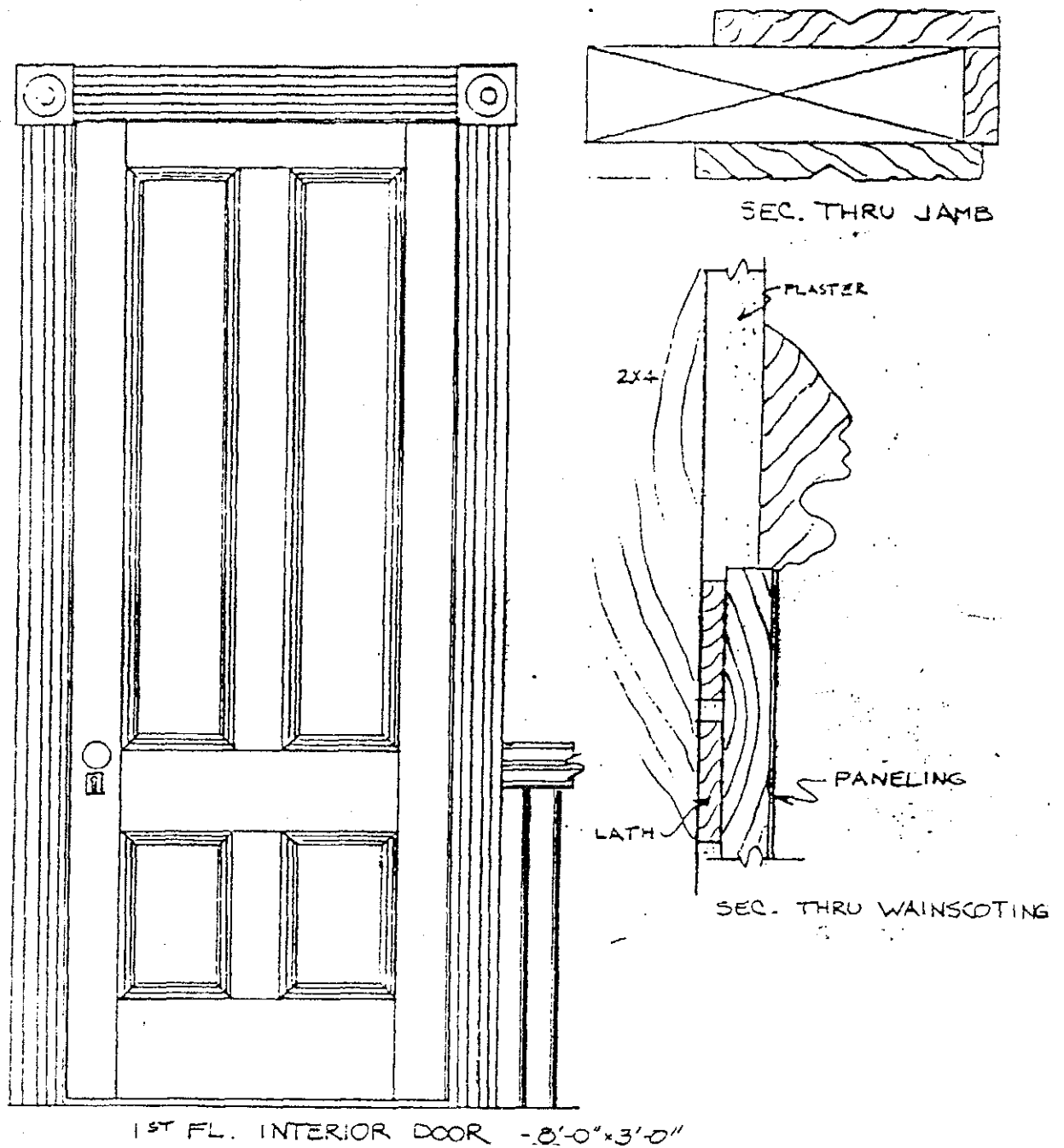
NORTH ELEVATION



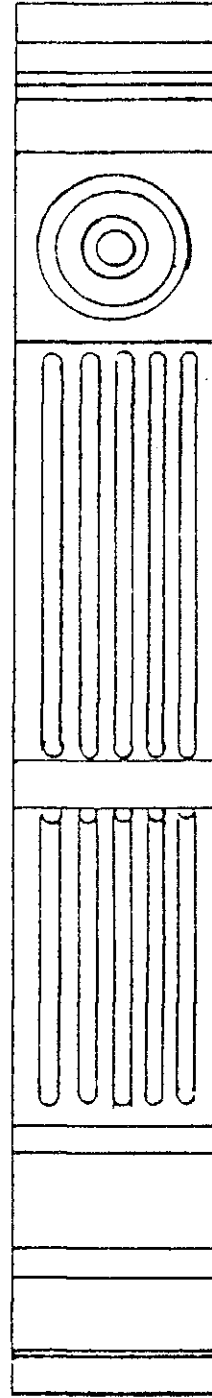
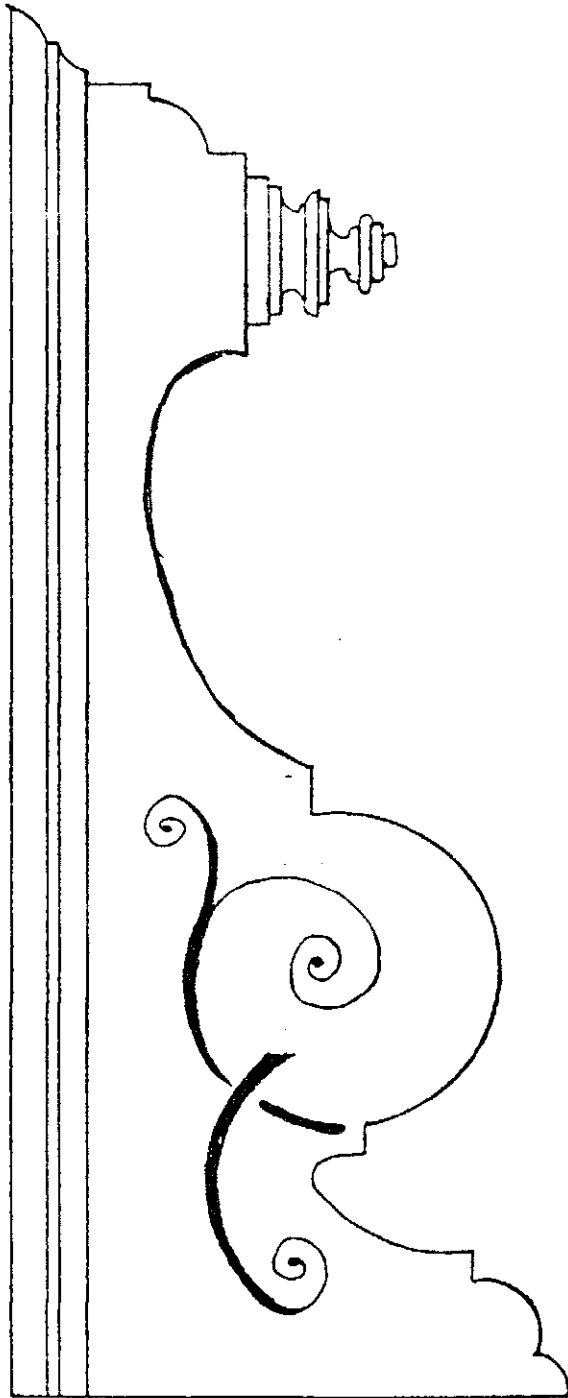
TRANSVERSE SECTION
1/8" = 1'-0"



ROOF FRAMING PERSPECTIVE
NO SCALE

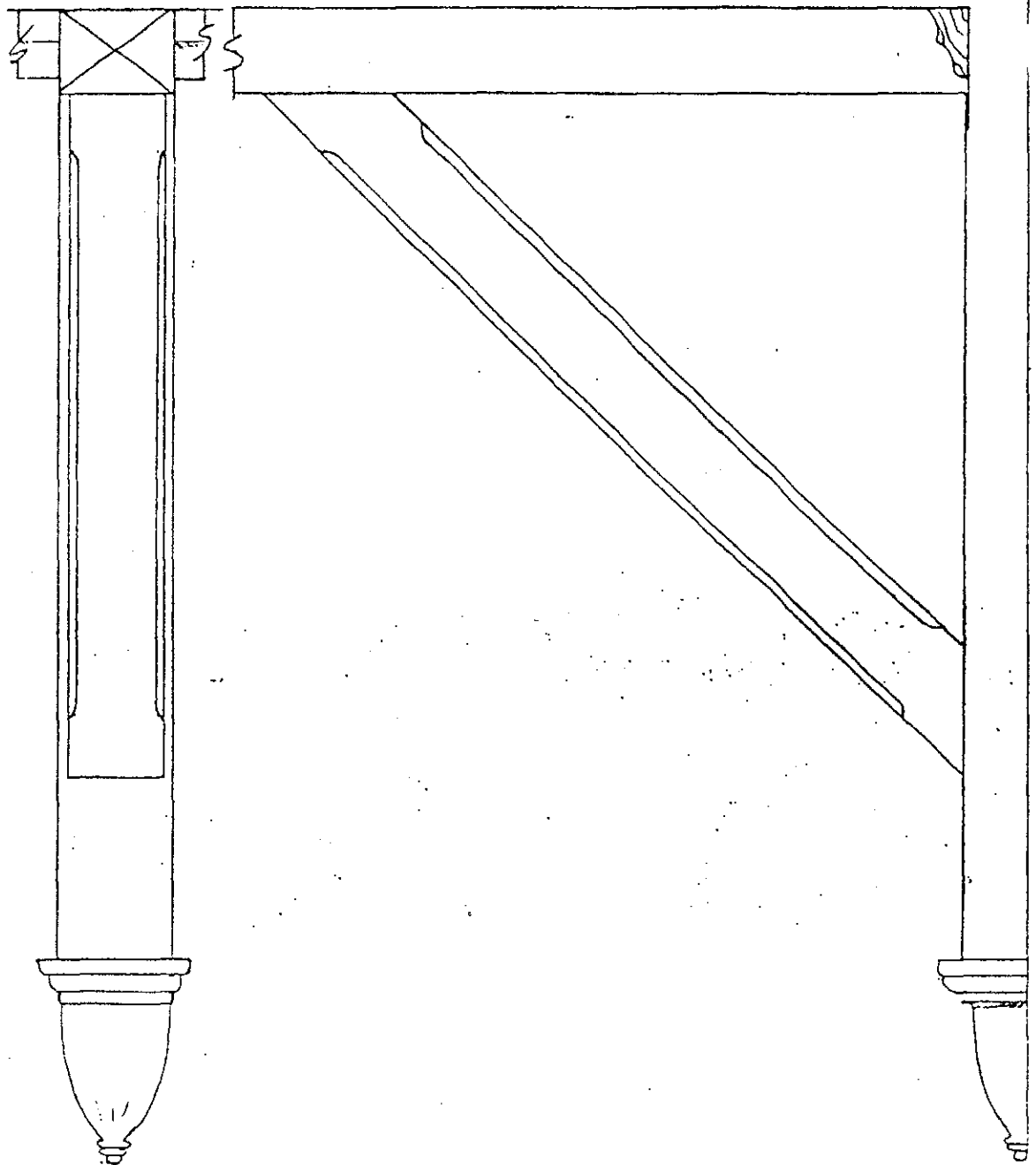


INTERIOR DETAILS



BALCONY BRACE TYP. (4)
1" = 1'-0"

INTERIOR DETAILS



CEILING BRACES